

Breathing.

The most important part of any moment of our day is our breathing. It is our life. In religions, the breath is paired with the spirit. The spirit is what we have: our inner warrior. It gives life. Master Splinter in Ninja Turtles says “everything starts with the breath.”

Correct Breathing Mechanics can break you or make you as an athlete or as a normal human. Diaphragmatic breathing is a must practice for anyone. Especially you singers and lifters.

There are two types of inhalation that we’re aware of: Mouth or Nose. Two methods: Quick or slow. A well trained Cardio athlete inhales through their nose for various reasons. For starters . . .

It is inherent that we know that the nose has a very primary specific purpose, which is to support our respiratory system (the primary purpose of the mouth, on the other hand, is to start the eating or drinking process).

Secondly, nasal breathing is a major line of defense against airborne pathogens. The mouth has no defense system. The nostrils, hair and nasal passageways work at filtering allergens and foreign bodies from entering the lungs.

Thirdly, the nose will also add moisture and warmth in our inhaled air for smoother entry to the lungs.

It can also allow for more oxygen to get to our active tissues. This is key because breathing through the nose releases nitric oxide, which is necessary to decreasing carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the blood, which, in turn, is what releases more oxygen. Nitric Oxide is a vasodilator, which means it helps to widen blood vessels. This can help improve oxygen circulation in your body. Mouth breathing does not effectively release nitric oxide, which means the cells are not getting as much oxygen as through nasal breathing, which could lead to fatigue and stress.

Nasal Inhalation benefits

- **reduce exposure to foreign substances**
- **humidify and warm inhaled air**
- **increase air flow to arteries, veins, and nerves**
- **increase oxygen uptake and circulation**

- slow down breathing
- improve lung capacity
- strengthen the diaphragm
- lower your risk of allergies or hay fever
- reduce your risk of coughing
- aid your immune system
- lower your risk of snoring and sleep apnea

Nasal breathing also activates the part of the nervous system that supports rest, recovery and digestion, rather than the part of the nervous system that is responsible for survival or stress states, such as flight or freeze. That means, even if the body is in a stressful state of high-intensity exercise, nasal breathing can provide a sense of peace and allow us to function better.

On the other hand, when you think of gasping for air or hyperventilating gulping and wheezing from our mouths. mouth breathing offloads too much co2 in our blood stream and we want oxygen to our tissues. Don't be a "Mouthbreather" - Eleven from Stranger Things.

If we're inhaling for a big lift: it doesn't matter how we get our breath as long as we do get a big inhale. The inhale should not stop at the shoulders or the chest- it should fill our entire insides in to the diaphragm. Belly Breathing. The inhale acts as an air bag system for our skeleton. The fuller we feel in our abdomen the less chance we have of injuring ourselves. This feeling of fullness has been coined the term "Bracing".

There are quick inhales and slow inhales. Quick inhales for quick movements and slow inhales for slow movements. . . .its quite natural.

After inhaling we must exhale. . .but how and when? There are 3 types of Exhalations in training: Recovery, Valsalva technique, and Hissing Grinds.

Bracing or breathing behind our shield during a big lift is crucial for survival and important if you want to progress in the life as a gym warrior. Exhales help us get tighter which is exactly what strength is: Tightness. Practice filling up with air in the Diaphragm and slowly exhaling (tsssst) make a hiss that comes from the abdomen and match the exhale with tightness in as many muscle

groups as you can focus on. That practice will carry over during our grinding lifts. Next practice gulping a big inhale while standing. Holding the breath and then lowering ourselves into a squat. On the way up perform the slow hissing exhale from the abdomen and focus on tightening as many muscle groups on the way up as you can . . . especially the glutes and abs.

Another practice would be during a plank-forearm or push up position. Relax and breathe in to abdomen to capacity and then match the exhale with how tight your muscles can get in that position. The Breath will begin to have an effect on us that helps us feel light when we are tight. It's almost as if our body is saying "push" with our exhale while we are exerting tension and effort.

Imagine our body is an aluminum can. The body works more or less the same way. When we trap air in your lungs with the Valsalva maneuver, our torso becomes much more rigid and unbending. This allows you to lift more weight without breaking.

Remember. The tighter we are . . . The lighter we are.

Power breaths or Valsalva maneuver is quick and powerful. Defined as the process of forcefully breathing out against a closed windpipe. Trying to breathe out with a closed windpipe creates an inner pressure called intra-abdominal pressure. As the lungs expand, they put pressure on the innards, and this helps our torso from bending out of position when we move loads.

The most common analogy for what's going on when we breathe is that of a soda can. A full soda can is stronger against punctures and bending. An empty one can crush easily. Power Breaths are short bursty jolts / spasms. They raise our blood pressure briefly so that our blood will shoot to all of our tissues. In training, the more muscle tissue we use the less issue we will have at accomplishing the action.

Recovery Exhalations are generally more relaxed and longer. This type of breathing can settle or slow our heart rate.

How we breathe determines our motivation. Are we Prey or Predators?

References

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